

Ball House  
Galveston, Galveston County, Texas

HABS NO. Tex-87

HABS  
TEX  
84-GALV  
4-

**ADDENDUM  
FOLLOWS...**

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District # 6. Tex 2  
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Birdsall P. Briscoe, District Officer  
4301 Main Street, Houston, Texas

HABS  
TEY  
94-GALV.  
4.

BALL HOUSE- 1405 24th St.  
Galveston, Galveston County, Texas

Owner Mrs. O. E. Mc Kenna

Date of Erection In the late 1850's

Architect Unknown

Builder George Ball

Present Condition Excellent

Number of Stories Two

Other Existing Records Unknown

Materials of Construction Frame Doric order- 4 cols. One story portion  
Ionic order.

Additional Data Geo. Ball was a cotton packer from New York.

The lumber in this home is Maine pine. The floor is put together  
with wooden pegs and the stair banister is hand carved.

Crowded tightly as it now is on each side by adjoining buildings the  
Ball house loses much of its beauty. Greek Revival again with excellent  
Doric Columns and an unusually decorative triglyphed cornice.

ADDENDUM  
FOLLOWS...

Rev. Dec. 1. '36 TWC

Addendum to:

George Ball House  
1405 24th Street  
Galveston  
Galveston County  
Texas

as recorded in 1936

HABS No. TX-27

HABS  
TEX  
84-GALV,  
4-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. Tx-27

GEORGE BALL HOUSE

An Addendum to:  
George Ball House  
1405 24th Street  
Galveston  
Galveston County  
Texas

Location: 1405 24th Street, Galveston, Galveston County,  
Texas

Present Owner  
and Occupant: Miss Isabel McKenna

Significance: George Ball was a prominent Galveston business  
man, financier and philanthropist. The original  
house was redone in the early 1880s and  
represents the interpretation of the late Greek  
Revival style at the advent of the Victorian  
period in Texas.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1857. Ball is reputed to have erected this structure in 1857. No positive documentation has been found to substantiate this statement.
2. Architect: None known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: Ball presumably built the house in 1857. In 1872 Ball is listed in the city directories as living in a hotel and the site was occupied by P.J. Willis, Sr. In 1881, the property was owned by J.G. Goldthwaite, who by the end of 1882 had expended \$15,000 in improvements to the house. In 1902 the house was purchased by the Rosenberg Library and moved to its present site.
4. Alterations and additions: The site of the house before being moved to the present location was the northwest corner of 23rd Street and Avenue I.

From a stylistic appraisal coupled with the documentary evidence it seems that the house as we know it today is substantially the

appearance that resulted after the 1881-82 renovation. All of the exterior details are Victorian Greek Revival in style and could not predate the Civil War.

In January 1902 the house, purchased for \$500 by the Rosenberg Library Association, was moved from the site, to make way for the present Rosenberg Library building and relocated in two sections on the present lots.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

George Ball was born May 9, 1817 in Gausevoort, Saratoga County, New York. At the age of twelve he lived with his uncle, George Hoyt, in Albany where he learned the trade of silversmith and jeweler. As a young man he traveled in the then western states finally settling for a time at Shreveport, Louisiana. Anxious to go to Texas, he returned to New York, formed a partnership with his brother, Albert, procured a small stock of general merchandise and with sufficient lumber for the erection of a small store house sent out by ship for Galveston.

He arrived in the fall of 1839 and soon leased a lot and erected his small store. His brother followed him a year later and the business prospered until it was dissolved in 1854.

In that year he associated with John H. Hutchings and John Sealy and formed the firm of Ball, Hutchings and Company for banking and commission purposes. The firm soon became a leading banking house in Texas and Ball became a wealthy man.

A year before his death, Ball donated a total of \$70,000 for the erection of a building in Galveston for public school purposes which was to be known as Ball High School. His will provided funds in trust for various charities; the largest being \$50,000 for aid to the poor.

C. Bibliography:

1. Secondary and published sources:

Brown, John. Indian Wars and Pioneers of Texas. pp. 155-159.

Galveston News. December 31, 1882.

Lewis Publishing Company. History of Texas. 1895.

Henry Rosenberg; 1824-1893, Galveston, Texas, 1918, p. 179.

Prepared by: John C. Garner, Jr.  
Director  
Galveston Architecture Inventory  
March 23, 1967.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The building is a two story frame, Greek Revival structure of the typical side-hall plan.
2. Condition of fabric: At present the structure is in good condition and well maintained.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The structure measures 29'-7 1/2" x 76'-3 1/2" including front gallery.
2. Foundations: Isolated brick piers.
3. Wall construction: Wood frame, weatherboarding.
4. Structural system: Braced frame with standard joists and sills.
5. Porches: A three bay double gallery extends across the front facade. The full height wood columns are fluted in the Doric style. They rest on classical pedestals. A wooden turned balustrade encloses the galleries.
6. Chimneys: Two exterior brick chimneys are located on the south wall.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The front entrance door is double with two panels and moulded trim. The vestibule door is paneled (large light). The front entrance has massive wooden architrave and engaged piers with classic details.
  - b. Windows: The porch windows are six-over-six light double-hung sash, extending to the floor. On the sides, the windows are six-over-six light double-hung wood sash.
8. Roof: The roof is hipped and shingled.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plan: Entrance door opens into a small vestibule which in turn opens into a stair-hall along the north side. Two major rooms flank the hall on the south.
2. Stairway: Located in entrance hall along the north wall is a straight stair with a landing at the top. The lower treads are flared. It has a heavy octagonal paneled and molded newel post and octagonally fluted and turned balusters.
3. Floor: Random width pine; wood throughout.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster, now papered.
5. Doors: Four paneled doors.
6. Trim: Molded trim around all openings.
7. Mechanical equipment:
  - a. Hardware: Mortice locks, butt hinges.
  - b. Lighting: Modern electric fixtures.
  - c. Heating: Modern, natural gas.

D. Site

1. Orientation and general setting: The building occupies lots in Outlot #37, West and faces east. The building on the adjoining lot to the north is a wing of the original house.

Prepared by: John C. Garner, Jr.  
Director  
Galveston Architecture Inventory  
March 23, 1967

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Galveston Survey was jointly sponsored by the National Park Service, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation and the Galveston Historical Foundation Inc., and developed under the direction of James C. Massey, Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS). The historical data was written by John C. Garner, Jr., acting as the Director of the Galveston Architecture Inventory. The written data was edited for transmittal to the Library of Congress in the summer of 1980 by Kent R. Newell of the HABS staff. The photographs were taken by Allen Stross in the summer of 1967.